

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 17-32 are pending herein. Claim 17 has been amended as supported by Figs. 11a and 11b, for example.

1. Claims 17-21 were rejected under §102(b) over Higashi. To the extent that this rejection may be applied against the amended claims, it is respectfully traversed.

Claim 17 has been amended to clarify that the microbridge suspended layers of two neighboring detectors are linked together by additional mechanical connections separate from the mechanical support devices, and that the mechanical connections are parallel only to the microbridge suspended layers such that the entirety of the mechanical connections are isolated from the substrate. Higashi fails to disclose at least these features.

First, Higashi fails to disclose mechanical connections that are parallel only to the microbridge suspended layers. Referring to Fig. 5 of Higashi, shown below, the two neighboring detectors shown as items 1 and 2 are connected together via a silicon nitride layer extending from point 3 to point 4, as shown below. The majority of the connecting silicon nitride layer is located on the sloped area between the microbridge suspended layer and the substrate. Therefore, the mechanical connections are not parallel only to the microbridge suspended layers, as recited in claim 17.

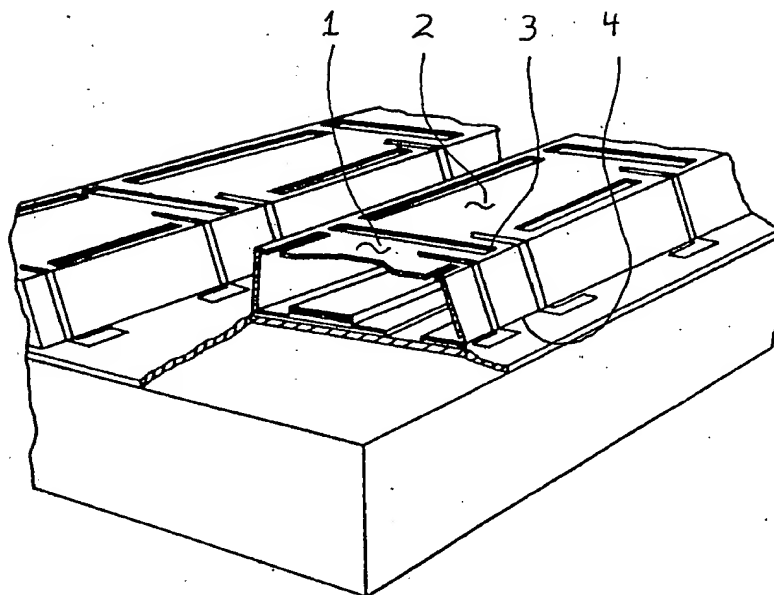


Fig. 5 (S)

Second, Higashi fails to disclose the entirety of the mechanical connections as being isolated from the substrate. As shown in Fig. 5 of Higashi, the two microbridge detectors are connected together with a silicon nitride layer extending from point 3 to point 4, as discussed above. Point 3 of the connection in Higashi is located on the microbridge detector layer, and point 4 is located on the substrate. Therefore, Higashi discloses mechanical connections which are connected between the microbridge layer and the substrate rather than being isolated from the substrate, as recited in claim 17.

For at least these reasons, claim 17 defines patentable subject matter over Higashi. Since claims 18-21 depend directly from claim 17, those claims are also believed to be allowable over the applied art.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection of claims 17-21 over Higashi are respectfully requested.

2. Claims 22-32 were rejected under §103(a) over Higashi in view of Hornbeck. Applicants respectfully submit that the arguments submitted above distinguish claim 17 from Higashi. Since claims 22-32 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 17, claims 22-32 are also believed to be allowable over the applied art.

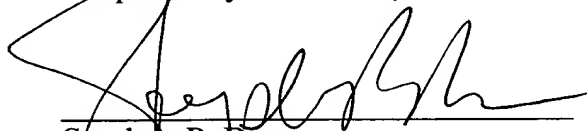
If the Examiner believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, the Examiner is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below. The Examiner is requested to acknowledge the Revocation of Power of Attorney-New Power of Attorney submitted herewith.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

May 25, 2005

Date

Respectfully submitted,



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